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HWV D-1/2a

March 17, 1959

MACMILLAN TALKS  
Washington, March 19-23, 1959

German Reunification  
(Position Paper)

An earlier version of this paper, circulated as D-1/2, was drafted by GEE - Mr. Harlan and cleared by EUR - Mr. Kohler; GER - Mr. Wigdornman; GPA - Mr. Lamson; CE - Mr. McSwainy and DIA - Mr. Swihart. The attached paper replaces D-1/2, which should be destroyed.

This paper reflects the refinements made in D-1/2 at an Interbureau meeting in the Acting Secretary's office on March 16.

It is circulated for your information.

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MACMILLAN TALKS

Washington, March 19-23, 1959

German Reunification

Anticipated British Position

The British may suggest with respect to German reunification:

1. That the Geneva free elections proposals be made more attractive by putting off the proposed free elections to a later stage of the reunification process; or,
2. That, since obviously agreement cannot be reached with the Soviets, the West German "magnetism" for the East should be utilized by encouraging de facto East-West contacts between the Germans to the extent feasible; or,
3. That, in the absence of agreement with the Soviets, and since the Germans seem increasingly less interested in reunification in any case, it may be necessary to consider making some accommodation with the Soviets in the present crisis with respect to the continued division of Germany.

Recommended United States Position

In general, we must continue to assert that the reunification of Germany is a Four Power responsibility as well as a fundamental wish of the German people and that such reunification must involve at an appropriate stage genuinely free elections. We must reject the Soviet assertion that German reunification is a problem for the Federal Republic and the GDR alone. We must likewise reject the Soviet-supported East German proposal for a German confederation.

In particular, with respect to the above positions which the British might take:

1. We believe that the free elections proposed at Geneva are essential at some stage in the reunification process, but we should be ready to consider their postponement to a later stage in working out general solutions of the German problem. There might be some tactical advantage in proposing the discussion of general peace treaty principles to start with.
2. De facto East-West German contacts, while in principle desirable, must not take place under circumstances which suggest a change in our attitude toward the status of the GDR, Berlin and the basic objective of German reunification.

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Authority

MR 90-324#2

By

JWS

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3. Any

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3. Any accommodation or detente with the Soviets based on continued division of Germany, would destroy German confidence in, and cooperation with, the West. It would be only a question of time until either the Soviets utilized their new position for fresh demands, or the Germans themselves would be tempted to work out a solution on their own. To maintain German loyalty to the West we must continue, both for the record and in good faith, to support German reunification.

### Discussion

While the British have always agreed that reunification of Germany is a Four Power responsibility and must be based on free elections, it is believed they would not object to seeing reunification postponed indefinitely. This British willingness to see the Germans kept "in their place" can be ascribed to the cumulative effect of wartime memories, postwar support costs and procurement difficulties, and disappointments over the Common Market and Free Trade Area, conditioned by an almost universal feeling at heart that the division of Germany is nothing to weep about. In addition, Embassy London reports that statements made since Macmillan's return from Moscow underscore the British conviction that it is absolutely essential that we negotiate with the Soviets and that while we must stand firm on Berlin, this alone is not a sufficient guaranty of peace. Embassy London notes that this official U.K. zest for negotiations may in the end build up formidable political pressure to reach agreement by unwise and too generous concessions.

The East German confederation proposal is strongly opposed by Adenauer and must be handled with great delicacy; we should await West German proposals in this regard.

U.S. policy on reunification must remain firm. It is our conviction that, whatever transient attitudes may exist toward the subject, the long-range prospect is that if we do not find a peaceful method of reuniting the nation, German leadership will inevitably arise which is prepared to do so by force, an effort which would surely entail global war.



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